

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for validating a vehicle operator, comprising:
an input device for allowing entry of vehicle operator identification information;
a transceiver for transmitting and receiving messages;
an interface for allowing a processor to communicate with a vehicle sub-system; and
said processor connected to said input device, said transceiver, and said interface, said processor for receiving said vehicle operator identification information from said input device, for generating a message comprising said vehicle operator identification information and providing said message to said transceiver, said transceiver for transmitting said message to a remote location, said processor further for controlling operation of said vehicle by way of said interface until a response to said message is received by said transceiver.
2. An apparatus for validating a vehicle operator, comprising:
an input device for allowing entry of vehicle operator identification information;
a transceiver for transmitting a message in response to entry of said vehicle operator identification information and for receiving a response to said message;
an interface for allowing a processor to communicate with a vehicle sub-system; and
a processor connected to said input device, said transceiver, and said interface, said processor for receiving said vehicle operator identification information from said input device, for generating said message comprising said vehicle operator identification information and providing said message to said transceiver, for receiving said response from said transceiver and for controlling said vehicle sub-system, via said interface, based on said response.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said response comprises impairing operation of a vehicle associated with said apparatus.
4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.
5. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

6. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle fuel system.

7. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises flashing a vehicle headlight, a vehicle taillight, or a vehicle interior light.

8. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises sounding a vehicle horn.

9. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein impairing operation of a vehicle transmission comprises limiting the number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.

11. A signal-bearing medium tangibly embodying a program of machine-readable instructions executable by a digital processing apparatus to perform a method for validating a vehicle operator, said method comprising operations of:

receiving vehicle operator identification information from a user interface;

generating a validation message comprising said vehicle operator identification information;

transmitting said validation message to a remote location;

receiving a response to said validation message; and

controlling operation of a vehicle based on instructions contained in said response.

12. The signal-bearing medium of claim 11 wherein the operation of controlling operation of a vehicle comprises impairing operation of a vehicle.

13. The signal-bearing medium of claim 12, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.

14. The signal-bearing medium of claim 12, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

15. The signal-bearing medium of claim 12, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle fuel system.

16. The signal-bearing medium of claim 12, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises flashing a vehicle headlight, a vehicle taillight, or a vehicle interior light.

17. The signal-bearing medium of claim 12, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises sounding a vehicle horn.

18. The signal-bearing medium of claim 12, wherein impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

19. The signal-bearing medium of claim 18, wherein impairing operation of a vehicle transmission comprises limiting the number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.